

"Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times"

Part 2

Daniel 1

Introduction: Last week we looked at a message from Daniel 1 and it was the start of a mini-series which I have entitled "Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times".

Now it was my plan to just skim over some of the events in the book of Daniel. But this week as I got deeper into the book of Daniel I began to realize that there is too much here to pass over and there is so much which pertains to what is happening in our world today.

These messages are messages which God has laid on my heart because of the direction which our Nation is going. It has come to the place where we are seeing the depravity of man manifest on a weekly basis. This past week it was the shooting of the police officers which took place in Texas.

There are many in our Nation who are confused as to what is happening but I believe if we study the Bible we can see very clearly that these events are happening because the Truth of God has been suppressed by the leadership within our Nation. For the most part today God has been pushed aside and there are many false gods that have been erected in His place. Mohammad has been given much attention as well as rampant idolatry.

Romans 1:28-32

²⁸ *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not convenient;*

²⁹ *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*

³⁰ *Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

³¹ *Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

³² *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Now let me show you these same verses in the Amplified Bible which will define the words a little more.

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or consider Him worth knowing [as their Creator], God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do things which are improper and repulsive,

²⁹ until they were filled (permeated, saturated) with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice and mean-spiritedness. They are gossips [spreading rumors],

³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors [of new forms] of evil, disobedient and disrespectful to parents,

³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful [without pity].

³² Although they know God's righteous decree and His judgment, that those who do such things deserve death, yet they not only do them, but they even [enthusiastically] approve and tolerate others who practice them.

This is what is unfolding before our eyes.

So with that said we need to be prepared and we need to be instructed as to how to live our lives in the midst of all of this.

Last week I explained to you that we do not need to live in fear because no matter how dark the society becomes God is still in control. This we shall see in our study today. This morning I want to start over again in the book of Daniel because there is so much more to see which we did not get last week.

I. The Background

Notice Daniel 1:1

The year of this verse is 605 BC. This was a dark time for the 2 southern tribes of Israel for it was in this year that Nebuchadnezzar came into Jerusalem and besieged it.

Before we get into the Babylonian invasion there are some other thoughts which we need to consider.

GOD NEVER BRINGS JUDGMENT WITHOUT WARNING.

These people had been warned many times about the coming judgment if they refused to repent. Let me explain the ways in which they were warned.

1. The captivity of the Northern Kingdom.

The 2 southern tribes were very aware of what started to take place about 740 BC.

1 Chronicles 5:26

²⁶ And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

Then about 20 years later the invasion by the Assyrians was completed.

2 Kings 18:11-12

¹¹ And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

¹² Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

So the Southern Kingdom was able to see what happened to the Northern Kingdom when they refused to repent of their sins.

2. The Warning of the Prophets.

Isaiah 1:4-7

⁴ Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

⁵ Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

⁷ *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.*

Isaiah spoke of the invasion and the captivity as though it was already complete.

Jeremiah 1:14-16

¹⁴ *Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.*

¹⁵ *For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.*

¹⁶ *And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.*

These are just a few of the prophetic warnings which God gave to the Southern Kingdom. Now let me show you what they did with the warnings. The roll in this text refers to the words of warning given by God to Jeremiah about the coming invasion.

Jeremiah 36:21-24

²¹ *So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.*

²² *Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.*

²³ *And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.*

²⁴ *Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.*

Now let me show you God's message to Jehoiakim after this was done.

Jeremiah 36:27-31

27 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,

28 Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

29 And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

30 Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

31 And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

Application:

God always gives warnings before He brings judgment. I point this out because we have had many warning within our own nation. There were the events of 9-11. Then there is the falling apart of society in many places.

II. The Deportation

There were 3 deportations of Jews taken to Babylon. The first was in 605 BC the second in 597 BC and the third was in 586 BC.

Notice Daniel 1:1-6

The deportation listed here in Daniel 1 was the one in 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar came into Jerusalem and I believe he had all intentions of completely overtaking the Jerusalem. But something happened which caused Nebuchadnezzar to return back to Babylon. His father who was Nabopolassar, died. So when this happened he chose to take Daniel and his friends as well as half of the vessels from Solomon's Temple.

Now there were several reasons why Nebuchadnezzar did this and there were several reasons why God permitted this to happen.

Nebuchadnezzar's Purposes

Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and his friends as hostages to keep Jehoiakim the king of Judah in check. He took the vessels from the house of God to show his power. When he took these back to Babylon he placed them in the Temple of Marduk one of the false gods and in his mind he was stating that Marduk was greater than the God of Judah. This again was a warning to the people of Judah that God had lifted His protection from the Southern Kingdom.

God's Purposes

Now we look at this and we can ask, "Why did God allow these things to happen to Daniel and his friends?"

God allowed the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father for several reasons:

1. This first invasion was a warning and so when Nebuchadnezzar had to stop and return back home, this was an opportunity for Judah to cry out to God for mercy.

But Judah refused to cry out to God but instead tried to rebel against the judgment of God.

2 Kings 24:1-3

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

² And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

³ Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

2. Another reason why God allowed Daniel and his friends to be taken was because God wanted his men in place before the other deportations took place.

There were 19 years from this deportation until the 3rd deportation so Daniel and his friends had 19 years of training before everyone arrived.

Application:

Let me tell you what this means to you and I in the midst of what is happening today. God will place His men where He desires for them to be so that His people can be provided for. We can be sure that no matter how dark it becomes within our nation that God is still working. He may abandon our nation but He will never abandon His children.

Let me turn this around for a moment and see Daniel's move in a different light. Let us place ourselves in Daniel's shoes. We would have many questions about why this happened to us. We often question God today when we have to deal with a sickness. What if we were deported and separated from our families?

We need to remember some lessons from the Word of God:

- 1. We are God's lights and His people so He can and will take us where it is that He desires for us to be.**

Proverbs 16:9

⁹ A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

I am convinced that we are good with this verse as long as God directs us where we desire to be.

- 2. God often takes His people through difficult times in order to train them for the ministry He has for them.**

Examples:

Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Jesus (He was made perfect through sufferings).

Conclusion:

We do not know what tomorrow holds but we certainly know who holds tomorrow. Next week we will get into the stand which Daniel took in the midst of all of this.